Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2007
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Patrick Finnegan

To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe, log on to our website at: www.atarinews.org and click on "Subscriptions".
OR subscribe to A-ONE by sending a message to: dpj@atarinews.org and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the following sites:

http://people.delphiforums.com/dpj/a-one.htm
Now available:
http://www.atarinews.org

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
http://forums.delphiforums.com/atari/

=~=~=~=

A-ONE #0926 06/29/07

~ Spyware Laws Are Split ~ People Are Talking! ~ eBay Pirates Plea!
~ Seagate Joins 1TB Club ~ Day of Silence Protest ~ VCF Midwest 3.0!
~ Belgian Police Hacked! ~ "Dear Citizen" Phish! ~ MightyBids On eBay!

~ New Domains In Works! ~ Web Teen Harassment! ~ Next-Gen Game Chips!

-* Video Games Are Not Addiction *-
-* Microsoft Antitrust Decree Extension *-
-* DOJ Cites Commitment To Fight Cybercrime! *-

=~=~=~=

->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Well, all is well with the world again - Paris is home once again! Can't you just feel her "pain" for the injustice she's suffered? What a world! Speaking of the world, it's been really hot around here lately (or at least until today). The first heat wave of the season, and it was a doozy! I don't necessarily mind the heat and humidity when there's a way to escape it. But, out on the golf course, it's pretty tough to cool down. Ice cold water can only do so much to get comfortable. Our swimming pool got some overtime duty this week! And when that was done, the air conditioning was cranked up (down?) for the rest of the day!

But, it's that time of the year. The 4th of July is next week, already! I think our annual block party is being held again, but I'll likely be out on the golf course - and not playing. We'll see. I enjoy the 4th - the fireworks and concert on Boston's Esplanade, the barbecues, a cool dip in the pool. Y'know, those enjoyable "summer things" when you don't make it to the beach.

So, why I'll start to plan what we're going to do for the day, I'll let you get busy doing what you most enjoy doing every Friday night - reading the new issue of A-ONE!

Until next time...

=~=~=~=

PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, here in the northeast we've had our first heatwave of the summer.

I'm sure that some of the people reading this are saying, "big deal... we've had <fill-in-the-blank> days over 90 here too", but it's a little different when you have three consecutive days of 90+ degree heat in the Mississippi delta than it is when you have 'em in New England. All I can say is, "thank goodness for air conditioning".

I’ve been using the hot, humid days to do one of my favorite things... watch movies.

I’m not talking about To Kill A Mockingbird or Casablanca or Dial ’M’ For Murder, I’m talking about An Inconvenient Truth and SiCKO. I’ve got my own personal copy of An Inconvenient Truth (a Christmas gift), and I was in line for the first showing of SiCKO.

Now before anyone gets the idea that I’m a big Michael Moore fan, let me just say that I disapprove of much of what Michael Moore puts on film. Well, not exactly WHAT he puts on film, but HOW he’s put it there.

Moore has often said that he sees his work as a counter-balance to the ’bad guys’ that he’s telling us about and, therefore, sees no need to allow them time to explain their views in his movies.

THAT is where he and I differ. If we were talking about the evening news, I’d say he had a point. News is... well, news. In it’s true form, it’s neither liberal nor conservative, neither left nor right. The truth is the truth, and there needs be no counter-balance. ’Fair and Balanced’ is a nice slogan, but it’s got nothing to do with news.

As a matter of fact the slogan "Fair and Balanced" strikes me the same way as "Plain and simple truth". You can be fairly sure that when someone hits you with that, the truth is neither plain nor simple.

Documentary cinema, on the other hand is, or should be, a macrocosm in and of itself. It should show everything and seek to explain all sides, all reasons, all possibilities.

Now, of course that would make for a very boring and incredibly confusing film, and I doubt anyone would want to pay much attention to it. So it was with a heavy heart that I’d watched other Michael Moore movies... knowing that I agreed with he and his point of view, but disagreeing with his presentation. Not so with SiCKO. With SiCKO, I think we’re beginning to see a more confident Mr. Moore.

Of course, the subject matter may play a big part in that change. After all, with subjects like fiscal responsibility, gun control and political trickery there are always those who will seek to justify ’the other side’. But who could do that with health care? It’d be like saying that you are against stopping at stop signs or having safety measures in place to test baby food.

Yes, I guess I’m getting more and more liberal in my ’old age’. But that’s what happens when checks and balances are both broken and there are those who, against even their own interests, steadfastly defend the broken mechanisms. It’s be like that little Dutch boy telling us that the cracks in the dam were actually a safety feature that will eventually help to provide us with all the water we need.

Well, enough of that. Let me just finish up here by saying that you should go and see SiCKO and, if you haven’t seen it already, rent An Inconvenient Truth.

Okay, let’s get to the news, hints, tips and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

==========

Last week there was a question about programming in Pascal. The question itself brought back memories, since my first contact with programming was with UCSD Pascal on an Apple][. I stunk at it, by the way. But during a holiday vacation, I contacted the local Apple dealer and asked if I could use one of the Apples he had on display to work on my project. He said that I could, but it would require that I purchase a processor card, since UCSD Pascal required a Z-80 processor, and the stock Apple][contained only a 6502 (if I remember correctly). The processor card cost somewhere on the order of $700.00, I think. Needless to say, I didn't do any coursework while I was home that vacation.

Anyway, the discussion of Pascal mutates to how GFA BASIC contains optimized code that could rival C programming routines. Lonny Pursell posts:

"I don't think you will necessarily end up with quicker procedures, in some cases GFA rivals "C" in speed. Unless you meant quicker to write?

I think also strings in Pascal are limited to 256 characters. If you want or need strings over that size, you will probably end up using memory blocks and pointers."

'Charles' tells Lonny:

"I love pointers and memory blocks...never used memory blocks, but I suppose thats the same as dimension-ing an area of memory. pointers within gfa are my favorite ....*a$,,,eh?

Is a memory block a reserved area of space?space for each char value? 1-byte , 2 - word -4 integer,8...16 etc etc for as many

Anyhow, keep in mind I'm still learning with little holding me back from experimenting...by the way , I think I may go back to gfa or omikron, 'cause pascal is very bad mannered at the moment."

'Peter' seizes upon Lonny's thought that some GFA routines may rival C, and asks:

"Out of curiosity - which cases are that?"

Lonny replies:

"I don't know specifics. One would have to dig out all the old GFA reviews in the old magazines where it was benchmarked against other basics and other languages."

Peter comes back and says,

"I see.. Funny. I haven't looked at PureC/Lattice, but I often study the assembler code generated by GCC just to be on the safe side. With optimizations enabled, I often find it hard to beat the compiler by

hand... Anyway, judging by the applications created using it, the GFA compiler is a lot faster than people might think."

Lonny adds:

"One can also squeeze a bit more speed out of it after reading the compiler manual. By default some compiler options generate slower code, such as it assumes functions return floats. Easily changed with a compiler switch inserted in the code.

A little used feature of GFA is the ability to directly compile DRI object files. This was partially broken, but the compiler is fixed now. It's very easy to incorporate "C" or assembler code into GFA where needed if one needs more speed or to create custom commands and functions."

Guillaume Tello adds:

"If I remember well, GFA has a special way to encode the floating values and uses high speed routines for floating point operations. If a standard IEEE encoding is not needed, then GFA gives you a real power in that way. Well, if you have a FPU... then "C" is better!"

Lonny tells Guillaume:

"The latest GFA lib from Ingo has the FPU support improved. We did not bench mark it against "C", quite possible "C" is still faster. The newer GFA lib is much fastest than the old GFA lib, that much is for sure."

Well folks, we ran out of messages from the NewsGroup much sooner than I thought we were going to. So here we are at the end of this week's column, none the worse for wear. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

=~=~=~=

->In This Week's Gaming Section - Next-Gen Gaming Chips!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Barker Unveils Jericho!
Games Not Addicting!
And more!

=~=~=~=

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Horror Guru Barker Unveils "Jericho" Video Game

Horror mastermind Clive Barker testified Tuesday to the crumbling walls between entertainment and gaming as he unveiled his upcoming video game at an industry conference.

"Jericho," a gory horror piece set in a remote desert outpost, was originally conceived as a novel by Barker. But the concept soon took hold in his imagination as a game, which will be released in the fall.

"Maybe if games hadn’t existed, I would have said, ’Make it a movie,"’ Barker said at the second annual Hollywood & Games Summit in Hollywood. "But I much prefer the idea of having 20 hours to play this world, to enter this labyrinth."

The man behind the "Hellraiser" franchise, dismissed skeptics of video games, noting that with just two decades of history under its belt, the equivalent of a "War and Peace" game might be on the horizon.

"We can’t be highhanded or condescending," Barker cautioned. "This is a very important area right now, and not just because it’s making a lot of money."

New Graphics Chips Enable Next-Gen Gaming

The next generation of computer games sporting more realistic visuals than ever is not yet in full swing but a range of new graphics chips is letting gamers beef up their PCs today in anticipation.

It’s the latest round in the grudge match between Nvidia Corp., the last remaining independent graphics chip company, and ATI, which was folded into PC processor maker Advanced Micro Devices Inc. last year.

The new chips are some of the most impressive pieces of silicon ever produced - sporting more than half a billion transistors, hundreds of processing engines and accompanied by more than half a gigabyte of memory.

The magic lies in their ability to run games using DirectX 10, the latest version of the software from Microsoft Corp., enabling games to run on its Windows operating system.

Only a handful of games take advantage of DirectX 10 now, but the most anticipated releases later this year - jungle shooter "Crysis," online role-playing game "Age of Conan" and "Unreal Tournament 3" - all use it.

"People are buying the new cards because you buy with a degree of headroom to support games coming down the pipeline. People want to buy today knowing they can maximize that experience," said AMD spokesman Jon Carvill.

AMD brought its newest Radeon chip to the table last month, giving it a powerful product to compete with Nvidia’s GeForce lineup, which it

refreshed in late 2006.

Reviewers have praised the $400 Radeon 2900 XT's specs and said that although initial tests showed it underperforming a comparable Nvidia card, the results should improve as AMD's engineers tweak its software.

"Fortunately AMD's driver team has a very solid history of delivering steady performance improvements as they become more familiar with the architecture. A month or two from now the performance picture could be drastically different," FiringSquad.com, a gaming hardware review site, said recently.

Nvidia has had six months to flesh out the GeForce family, which is now capped by the 8800 Ultra, whose $800 price tag essentially limits it to hardcore gamers who don't blink at spending as much on a PC as other people would spend on a car.

"That's for the guy who has everything. Amazingly enough, we sell a ton of them. It's a lot like the car industry - you've got to have the fastest hotrod," said Derek Perez, head of public relations for Nvidia.

At the other end of the spectrum is the 8400, which goes for well under $100 and puts next-gen gaming within reach of the mass market, albeit with images that are less sharp and motions less smooth than pricier cards produce.

All that has helped Nvidia grab market share from AMD. In the market for stand-alone graphics cards - rather than the low-powered integrated graphics chips in many inexpensive PCs - Nvidia saw its share rise to 59 percent in the first quarter, up from 47 percent a year ago.

"Nvidia's 8 series is competing against AMD's prior generation right now. The competition will likely heat up in the second half as AMD fleshes out its 2000-series product line," said Dean McCarron, head of market research firm Mercury Research.

AMD promises mid-range and low-end Radeons will be coming out in time for the crucial back-to-school PC buying season.

"Right now what we're focusing on is getting our mainstream products to market. These are the big-volume sellers for us and will drive mainstream adoption of DirectX 10," Carvill said.

Addiction Experts Say Video Games Not An Addiction

Doctors backed away on Sunday from a controversial proposal to designate video game addiction as a mental disorder akin to alcoholism, saying psychiatrists should study the issue more.

Addiction experts also strongly opposed the idea at a debate at the American Medical Association's annual meeting.

They said more study is needed before excessive use of video and online games - a problem that affects about 10 percent of players - could be considered a mental illness.

"There is nothing here to suggest that this is a complex physiological

disease state akin to alcoholism or other substance abuse disorders, and it doesn’t get to have the word addiction attached to it," said Dr. Stuart Gitlow of the American Society of Addiction Medicine and Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York.

A committee of the influential physicians’ group had proposed video game addiction be listed as a mental disorder in the American Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders, a guide used by the American Psychiatric Association in diagnosing mental illness.

Such a move would ease the path for insurance coverage of video game addiction.

Even before debate on the subject began, the committee that made the proposal backed away from its position, and instead recommended that the American Psychiatric Association consider the change when it revises its next diagnostic manual in 5 years.

The psychiatrist group has said if the science warrants, it could be considered for inclusion in the next diagnostic manual, which will be published in 2012.

While occasional use of video games is harmless and may even help with some disorders like autism, doctors said in extreme cases it can interfere with day-to-day necessities like working, showering or even eating.

"Working with this problem is no different than working with alcoholic patients. The same denial, the same rationalization, the same inability to give it up," Dr. Thomas Allen of the Osler Medical Center in Towson, Maryland.

Dr. Louis Kraus of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and a psychiatrist at Rush University Medical Center, said it is not yet clear whether video games are addictive.

"It’s not necessarily a cause-and-effect type issue. There may be certain kids who have a compulsive component to what they are doing," he said in an interview.

But addictive or not, too much time spent playing video games takes away from other important activities.

"The more time kids spend on video games, the less time they will have socializing, the less time they will have with their families, the less time they will have exercising," Kraus said.

"They can make up academic deficits, but they can’t make up the social ones," he said.

The AMA committee will consider the testimony and make its final recommendation to the AMA’s 555 voting delegates, who will vote on the matter later this week.

The Entertainment Software Association, which represents the $30 billion global video game industry, said more research is needed before video game addiction should be categorized as a mental disorder.

=~=~=~=

Vintage Computer Festival Midwest 3.0:
July 14-15, West Layatette, IN, USA

It's just 3 weeks until the third annual Vintage Computer Festival, Midwest edition. We've got a few interesting speakers lined up, and more to be added shortly.

So come all ye collectors, see the speakers, and even exhibit your favorite items from your collection! We still have plenty of space to fill up with exhibitors. If you're interested in being an exhibitor, please sign up before Sunday, July 8th. Don't wait until the last minute, or there may not be space left!

VCF/Midwest 3.0 will be July 14-15, at Purdue University's Stewart center. Speakers will run from 11a to 2p each day, and exhibits and the marketplace will be open from 2p to 6p. Admission is $5 per day for access to the whole event, and kids 17 and under get in for free.

For more details, and to sign up as an exhibitor or vendor, please see the official VCF/Midwest 3.0 website at:

http://www.vintage.org/2007/midwest/index.php

If you have any questions, feel free to send me a message at:
vcfmw at computer-refuge.org.

Pat

=~=~=~=

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Google Seeks To Extend Microsoft Antitrust Decree

Google Inc. asked a federal judge on Monday to extend the consent decree that settled the landmark antitrust case against Microsoft Corp. in order to address competition concerns involving the Windows Vista operating system.

Google told the judge overseeing the 2002 consent decree that even though Microsoft has agreed to modify Vista to address the concerns, "more may need to be done to provide a truly unbiased choice of desktop search

products."

The court brief was filed by Google less than a week after Microsoft agreed to modify its Windows Vista operating system in response to a complaint by Google that Vista's computer search function put other potential rivals at a disadvantage.

The agreement was announced last week with the Justice Department and 17 state attorneys general and the District of Columbia. Microsoft promised to build into Vista an option to let users select a default desktop search program on personal computers running Windows.

The Vista function, known as "Instant Search," allows Windows users to enter a search query and get a list of results from their hard drive that contain the search term.

Under Microsoft's agreement with the Justice Department, the changes to Vista will be introduced in a service pack, or updated version of Windows Vista software. Microsoft said it anticipates a test version of the Vista Service Pack 1 to be ready by the end of the year.

On Monday, Google said some of the steps Microsoft has agreed to take are "only vaguely described" and that by the time it goes into effect, the consent decree will have already have expired.

The consent decree restricting Microsoft's conduct, which settled the government's antitrust case against the company, is scheduled to expire in November. However, some provisions have already been extended to November 2009.

Microsoft spokesman Jack Evans said in a statement on Monday that the company had addressed the concerns raised by Google and opposed the idea of extending the consent decree.

"The government has clearly stated that it is satisfied with the changes we're making. Google has provided no new information that should suggest otherwise in their filing," Evans said.

DOJ Committed To Fighting Cybercrime

The U.S. Department of Justice and President George Bush are committed to fighting intellectual-property theft and cybercrime, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales told a small audience in Seattle on Wednesday morning.

He cited a number of initiatives the DOJ has launched in the past year and detailed a few high-profile arrests of cybercriminals as examples of the government's focus on the issues. Just last month in Seattle, for example, authorities indicted Robert Soloway, known as the "spam king," for his role in sending millions of spam e-mails and selling useless mass e-mailing products and services. "In bringing cases like this, we recognize that spam is not just an annoyance," Gonzales said.

The DOJ has 240 federal prosecutors around the country who are trained to address complex computer crimes, he said. This week, many of them are attending a meeting in Florida with computer industry experts to beef up their training in how to respond to cyber incidents, he said.

The DOJ has a similar number of prosecutors who are specially trained to handle intellectual-property theft investigations. Gonzales pointed to another local arrest from last year that was possible because of the work the DOJ is doing to prosecute such criminals. Scott Laney, a Washington man, was sentenced to five years in prison and fined more than $9 million for his role in acquiring Microsoft software at reduced rates and illegally reselling it at near market value. "The stiff sentence in this case shows modern-day pirates that we take these crimes seriously," Gonzales said.

His biggest concern is that piracy is an easy way for criminals to raise money that could be used for other illicit activities, including terrorism. "It's more than just a question of protecting IP, it's a question of security," he said.

The DOJ is also reaching out to overseas governments in hopes of encouraging them to crack down on intellectual-property crime. Last year, the DOJ provided training to more than 3,000 foreign prosecutors, investigators and judges in more than 100 countries, he said. "IP theft is undeniably an international concern," he said.

Gonzales spoke at an event organized by TechNet Northwest, an association of technology companies that focuses on public policy and politics to help promote the high-tech economy. The event was also promoted by the Discovery Institute, a group that promotes creationism. Around 50 people attended.

Gonzales didn't touch on a more sensitive local issue: The firing of Western Washington U.S. Attorney John McKay late last year. A small group of Seattlites didn't forget though, gathering outside of the hotel where Gonzales spoke to protest the firing and other issues.

Policy Experts Split On Spyware Laws

Two of the agencies most actively involved in bringing cyber-criminals to justice in the United States have expressed opposing opinions over pending anti-spyware legislation.

Even as a trio of spyware bills is moving forward on Capitol Hill, officials from the Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) said their two organizations have differing views on the need for passage of the proposed laws.

At a forum sponsored by the Anti-Spyware Coalition and held here at Harvard Law School on June 27, officials from the FTC and CDT - a Washington-based nonprofit that has become a prominent Internet policy watchdog - detailed areas where their organizations diverge regarding Congressional anti-spyware bills.

The Anti-Spyware Coalition - a security consortium backed by industry players including AOL, Dell, Google, McAfee, Microsoft, and Yahoo - hosted the panel that brought legal experts from the two organizations together to air their differences. The discussion was hosted by John Palfrey, executive director of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law, a well-known expert in the field of Internet security and privacy issues

The three pieces of legislation being debated were the Internet Spyware Prevention Act of 2007 (I-SPY Act) and Securely Protect Yourself Against Cyber Trespass Act (SPY ACT) - both of which passed vote in the U.S. House of Representatives in May and remain up for debate in the Senate - and the Counter Spy Act of 2007, introduced before the Senate in mid-June.

While both the FTC and CDT are actively involved in attempts to bring suspected purveyors of spyware to court and stop them from distributing illegal code to end-users, the agencies appear to be divided over whether the new laws will result in more prosecutions.

The CDT supports passage of all three proposed bills, claiming that any additional laws that increase civil and criminal penalties against spyware brokers and better define illegal practices will prove helpful in bringing new cases - despite the group’s recognition of flaws in all three bills.

For its part, the FTC contends that the new laws may only serve to muddle its ability to go after cyber-criminals when it finds them.

In outlining each of the bills for the assembled audience, CDT Deputy Director Ari Schwartz highlighted the group’s hopes for each of the measures.

The I-SPY Act is the least controversial of the three bills in that it merely seeks to extend penalties established in the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act - originally passed in 1986 - and make the legal punishments for criminal hacking more severe.

The CDT is fully behind the bill and it passed through House hearings with almost no opposition, proving its overall appeal, Schwartz said.

The SPY ACT - originally written by California Republican Rep. Mary Bono and passed by the House in previous sessions - has proven more divisive; some businesses are expressing serious concerns about the proposal’s limitations on consumer information gathering and the fact that the bill would supersede existing state anti-spyware laws.

Even though the CDT is against the idea of undercutting existing state laws, the group still supports the measure as it raises penalties on some criminal cyber-crimes and directly addresses troublesome spyware affiliate distribution issues, said Schwartz.

The Counter Spy Act was only recently re-introduced by Arkansas Democratic Sen. Mark Pryor. Previous backers of the bill were voted out of Congress last year, making chances slim that the legislation will move forward quickly. However, the CDT favors the bill’s effort to more clearly define the parameters of illegal adware programs, said Schwartz.

Issues over the weighting of state and federal anti-spyware measures shouldn’t stand in the way of the proposed bills, whose benefits outweigh their loopholes and could help lead to more cases against cyber-criminals, the CDT leader contends.

He cited the relatively light punishment handed out in cases brought against proven spyware brokers such as DirectRevenue and Zango as proof that existing laws are insufficient.

"Raising penalties is useful, DirectRevenue should have been fined more than $5 million, Zango should have been fined more than $3 million, and they would have been if we had more direct penalties," Schwartz said.

"Most people are supportive of these bills, CDT would be happy with raising penalties without pre-empting the states, but most companies looking at these bills are pushing for pre-emption."

On the flip side, the FTC feels that existing laws provide it with sufficient power to go after spyware providers, even though the agency has only filed a dozen such suits in recent years.

Tracy Shapiro, an attorney for the FTC's Advertising Practices Division, said the federal watchdog would like to see legislation that increases civil penalties against cyber-criminals, but it feels that the new bills could eventually get in its way in bringing accused spyware companies to trial. The Computer Fraud and Abuse Act remains broad enough to provide for continued prosecution of the most significant offenders, including spyware providers, she said.

"In general there doesn't need to be a law specifically outlining spyware. There's a danger in saying 'no keystroke logging' because that's too specific and someone might look at the law and say another practice is OK," said Shapiro. "Sometimes it's hard to craft legislation to address specific types of technologies; it seems like a good argument against new laws if we can get judgments already."

In addition to the potential to create loopholes by limiting their scope to existing threats, the specific nature of the bills could make them hard to apply to similar threats carried out in the future on mobile devices, as opposed to today's PC-based spyware schemes, she said.

On the flip side, Schwartz said the CDT has been surprised and disappointed that the FTC hasn't brought any lawsuits based on the SafeWeb Act, passed by Congress in 2006 and aimed at helping the agency fight spam, spyware, and online fraud.

The expert said it was particularly puzzling that the FTC hasn't taken advantage of elements of the SafeWab law aimed at aiding in the pursuit of cyber-criminals operating in other countries - widely recognized as one of the biggest challenges in fighting malware and online fraud.

"We've seen very little action under the SafeWeb Act; there have been some joint spyware cases with Canada where U.S.-based adware companies were working within Canada, which seemed like the perfect opportunities to use it," said Schwartz. "We thought [SafeWeb] was worth passing, and we want to see some action on it soon."

Shapiro admitted that she didn't know of any cases brought by the FTC that have sought to apply the SafeWeb laws. In the area of international cyber-law enforcement, she said it remains a challenge to share information with some foreign governments.

Other Anti-Spyware Coalition contributors remarked that they share the FTC's concerns over passing laws that may eventually serve to handcuff enforcers with outdated terms and conditions.

"We're pretty much against the laws," said Alex Eckelberry, president of anti-spyware applications vendor Sunbelt Software. "We think they will do more harm than good."

DOJ Warns of Phishing Attack

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is alerting e-mail users about a possible phishing attack using messages that claim to be from the DOJ.

In a news release Thursday, the DOJ said the e-mails may have the subject field or be addressed "Dear Citizen." It also said the messages may refer to a fraudulent U.S. Internal Revenue Service case filed against the recipient, and may contain a DOJ logo in the body of the mail or as an attachment.

The DOJ said the e-mail is a hoax, and asked recipients yp neither open the message nor download any attachments that come with it, and delete the message immediately. The department said it would not contact users about such matters via e-mail.

Anyone receiving the e-mail is asked to file a complaint via a DOJ Web site, http://www.ic3.gov.

DOJ Warns of ’Dear Citizen’ Phishing Scam

While summer is often the time for fishing, the U.S. Department of Justice is warning that it is also the time for phishing. In particular, the DOJ issued an alert about a fraudulent e-mail purportedly to be from the DOJ itself.

"Phishing" is the term given to fraudulent e-mails that attempt to con the user into giving up confidential information or visiting imitation Web sites, often by pretending to be from an imaginary person or a known organization.

The DOJ warned that the "Dear Citizen" phishing e-mails indicate that the recipients or their businesses have been the subject of complaints filed with the DOJ and have been brought to the attention of the IRS.

Complete with a case number and a note that the complaint was "filled [sic] by Mr. Henry Stewart," the e-mails include the DOJ logo and an attachment.

The Justice Department said that it has not sent these e-mail messages, and, in any case, would not send messages to the public via e-mail. The recipient of such a hoax message should not respond, the DOJ said, and should immediately delete it and then empty the delete folder.

The government advised that if a user has received such a hoax, he or she should file a complaint at the Internet Crime Complaint Center (www.ic3.gov), a partnership between the FBI and the National White Collar Crime Center. In the complaint, "DOJ spoof e-mail" should be entered in the "Business Name" field.

The DOJ also warned that users should be wary of any unsolicited e-mail supposedly from U.S. government agencies. These e-mails often direct the recipient to provide confidential information or to download attachments.

The department noted that opening such attachments can result in viruses, keystroke loggers, or other malware installed on the unsuspecting victim’s PC.

The DOJ is not alone among government agencies being used as part of an Internet scam. The department reported that similar hoax e-mails have been issued that allegedly came from the FBI, the FTC, and the IRS, among others.

And government agencies are not the only organizations used in hoaxes. In May, for instance, there were reports of spam e-mails supposedly from the Better Business Bureau. The e-mail said that a complaint had been filed with the BBB, and that an attachment contained more information.

In fact, the attached Word document was really a keylogger that installed after the user opened it. The keylogger would send keystrokes - including passwords or account numbers - to a server in Malaysia.

This was actually the second time in several months that the BBB's name had been used. In February, another phishing e-mail said it was from the BBB, and it had links to subdirectories on a hijacked Web site. At that Web site, users were asked to download a document, which contained a virus.

Worm Targets Harry Potter Fans

Sophos has warned Harry Potter fans not to open an e-mail which claims to contain the final instalment of the boy wizard book series.

Security companies have intercepted an e-mail promising a copy of 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows' - which is not due for release until July 21. But rather than getting a sneak preview of the book, impatient muggles who click on the file will instead find their PC infected by the W32/Hairy-A worm.

"The W32/Hairy-A worm can automatically infect a PC when users plug in USB drives, which carry a file posing as a copy of the eagerly anticipated novel - 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows'," said Sophos. "If the users have allowed USB drives to 'auto-run' they will see a file called HarryPotter-TheDeathlyHallows.doc."

Instead of the full text of JK Rowling's highly anticipated book, the Word document includes the phrase: 'Harry Potter is dead.'

After infecting Windows computers, the worm creates a number of new users - namely the main characters from JK Rowling's celebrated series of books about student wizards: Harry Potter, Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley.

In addition, every time infected users open Internet Explorer they will find their start page has been redirected to an Amazon.com web page selling a spoof book entitled 'Harry Putter and the Chamber of Cheesecakes.'

"Much of the world is waiting with bated breath for the final Harry Potter novel, and the premiere of the new movie is looming too. There is a real danger that muggles will blindly allow their USB flash drives to auto-run and become infected by this worm," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant for Sophos. "Using such social engineering at this time is a trick dastardly enough for Lord Voldemort himself."

Teen Arrested For Hacking Belgian Police Website

A Belgian teenager has been arrested for hacking and temporarily shutting down the federal police website, leaving a mocking on-line note which helped identify him, police said.

The 17-year-old boy was questioned and released over the weekend after the website was shut down on Friday. It was the first time that the Internet site, with its French and Dutch versions, was the target of a hacker attack.

According to the regional Sud Presse newspapers, which broke the story, a message in French was posted on the site saying: "The Spycheck Team must be happy that a boy of 17 has hacked the Belgian police website."

"The security of your site well reflects the police’s lack of competence. Webmaster: You better go and revise the system. Government: Recruit higher calibre police officers..."

The adolescent was arrested Saturday following a search of his home in the Brussels suburb of Rhode-Saint-Genese.

He was released the same evening after appearing before an investigating magistrate, a federal police spokesman told AFP. He will later be summoned to appear in a minors court.

On Monday the police website (www.polfed.be) bore the triumphant message: "The hacker of the federal police website arrested within 24 hours."

Two Plead To Selling Counterfeit Software On eBay

Two more defendants have pleaded guilty to charges of criminal copyright infringement for selling counterfeit software with a retail value of nearly $6 million on eBay Inc., the U.S. Department of Justice announced.

Robert Koster of Jonesboro, Arkansas, and Yutaka Yamamoto of Pico Rivera, California, both pleaded guilty Monday in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, the DOJ said in a news release. The two pleaded guilty to selling counterfeit software from Rockwell Automation.

The two will be sentenced in November, along with four other defendants who pleaded guilty in Milwaukee in April.

Rockwell Automation produces, among other products, specialized factory management software. The majority of the software applications sold by these defendants on eBay had retail prices ranging from about $900 to $11,300.

From September 2003 to September 2004, Koster offered counterfeit software in 105 or more online auctions, receiving a profit of more than $23,000, the DOJ said. The retail value of the software was more than $5 million.

From December 2003 to August 2004, Yamamoto initiated at least 92

auctions, for a profit of $6,000, the DOJ said. The retail value of the software was about $543,000.

Including Monday's pleas, the DOJ has gotten nine convictions involving eBay auctions of counterfeit Rockwell Automation software. In addition to six pleas in Wisconsin, there have been two convictions in the Eastern District of Michigan and another in the Southern District of Indiana. The combined retail value of the counterfeit software in all nine prosecutions is approximately $30 million, the DOJ said.

Web Radio Stations Set For "Day of Silence" Protest

Web radio broadcasters across the United States were preparing for a 'Day of Silence' on June 26 to protest the U.S. government's plans to boost royalty payments to artists and record companies by more than 300 percent, when their music is played online.

"These proposals will bankrupt the industry," Jake Ward, a spokesman for the lobbying group SaveNetRadio Coalition, said on Monday. "They're killing the Golden Goose."

The 'Day of Silence' is being organized by SaveNetRadio Coalition, whose 14,000 members include: Yahoo Inc., Viacom Inc, and RealNetworks Inc..

SaveNetRadio said the U.S. Copyright Royalty Board's March decision to boost royalty rates will kill the fledgling industry, if goes into effect on July 15. It is hoping the 'Day of Silence' will help raise public awareness of the issue.

The organization said the proposal also requires additional administrative fees which the organization estimated could cost Webcasters around $1 billion.

New Domains In Works At Internet Meeting

New Internet addresses, including those entirely in foreign languages, are under review by a key oversight agency, although meetings this week in Puerto Rico are likely to conclude with more questions.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers scheduled several discussion sessions in San Juan on separate proposals to more rapidly expand the pool of domain name suffixes - the ".com" part of an e-mail or Web address - and to permit non-English characters for the first time.

Individuals and companies outside the United States long have clamored for non-English scripts, finding restrictive the current limitation to the 26 English letters, 10 numerals and the hyphen. Addresses partly in foreign languages are sometimes possible, but the suffix itself for now requires non-English speakers to type English characters.

Paul Twomey, ICANN's chief executive, said Monday that the organization expects a report or two on policy questions it would need to address before allowing such names.

For example, should the operators of China’s ".cn" automatically be entitled to the Chinese version of that, ".com" and anything else in the language? What if operators of Taiwan’s ".tw" want to claim it?

"Who gets the string? What’s the string for? How many do you get for a country or territory?" Twomey said of the likely questions to be raised by ICANN’s committees.

Engineers also will continue work on tests to make sure the non-English scripts won’t disrupt users’ ability to send e-mail and reach Web sites. Nonsensical strings will be entered into the retrofitted domain name system and can be quickly removed if trouble arises.

Meanwhile, ICANN has scheduled workshops to discuss procedures for additional domain suffixes in English. It would be the third major round and the first beyond a pilot since the system was created in the 1980s.

Under the procedures being considered, all applicants would go through an initial review phase during which anyone may raise an objection on such grounds as racism, trademark conflicts and similarity to an existing suffix.

For straightforward strings in which no objection is raised, approval would come within three months. Otherwise, the application would undergo a more thorough review.

During the past two rounds, all applications faced extended reviews, leading to criticism that the organization had been slow and at times arbitrary - particularly with its March decision to reject ".xxx" for porn sites. One application, for ".post," has been pending since March 2004.

Twomey said ICANN’s Generic Names Supporting Organization is likely to forward recommendations to the organization’s board but leave it to its staff to figure out the details. Pending questions include where to draw the line between free speech and threats to morality and public order.

"That’s not going to be easy," said Twomey, who has said the new names could start appearing in the summer of 2008.

Seagate Joins the Terabyte Disk Club

Seagate is a launching a pair of 1TB capacity disks with advanced power-saving technology. This could save up to a quarter of the power consumed by normal drives. It has also announced a ruggedized 2.5-inch drive holding 80G bytes. Hitachi was first to market with a 1T byte drive a month or so ago.

The Barracuda 7200.11 is a 3.5-inch format drive, spinning at 7,200rpm and holds 500GB, 750GB or 1TB of data. Its sustained data rate of 105MB/s is the highest ever attained for a desktop drive and it is also the world’s quietest desktop drive. Conceptually the 1TB drive is four 250GB platters using Seagate’s 2nd generation perpendicular recording technology. The interface is serial ATA (SATA) II running at 3GB/s

The Barracuda ES.2 is the enterprise version of the drive with improved mean time before failure of 1.2 million hours compared to the consumer version’s 1 million hours. It has both SATA and SAS (serial attached SCSI)

interfaces and comes in 250GB, 500GB, 750GB and 1TB configuration.

Seagate has added a power-saving technology, branded PowerTrim, to these drives. Their electronics are managed by new firmware and hardware that monitors what the drive is doing and switches off power to unused parts of the drive electronics. If the drive is reading then separate read electronics can be switched off. Ditto for the write electronics if the drive is reading data. If there is no data being transferred then the cache and memory can be switched off and/or refresh cycles delayed.

This micro-control of power within the drive yields an average power saving of about 25 percent over a drive without the technology. That translates into quite a substantial power saving in an array of such drives. It generates a 125GB/watt rating compared to the previous ES generation's 80GB/watt.

The drives come with either SATA (for consumers and enterprises) or SAS (for enterprises) interfaces and have an MFRP of US$399, which is the same as competitor Hitachi GST's 1TB drive.

Hitachi's 5-platter 1TB drive does not come with an SAS interface making it less attractive to enterprise customers.

Seagate has also announced the ES25.2, a hardened 80GB, 2.5-inch, SATA drive built to operate in rough environments with hostile temperature, vibration, humidity, shock and altitude conditions. It can withstand more vibration than any other stand-alone drive and comes with a 5-year warranty.

One-Third of Online Teens Harassed

Nearly a third of online teens say they have been harassed on the Internet, with girls and participants of social-networking sites more likely to be targets, a study finds.

However, two-thirds of teens say bullying and harassment occur more often offline.

According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, the most common forms of cyberbullying are publicly disclosing someone else's private e-mail or messages, sending threatening or aggressive messages and spreading rumors online.

Pew also counts as cyberbullying the posting of an embarrassing picture of someone else without permission.

Thirty-two percent of online teens said they have experienced at least one of those acts. It rose to 38 percent among online girls and 39 percent among users of social-networking sites like News Corp.'s MySpace and Facebook.

The telephone study of 886 U.S. Internet users age 12 to 17 was conducted Oct. 23 to Nov. 19. It has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Auction Site Selling Itself On eBay

You might call it the ultimate full-circle moment: Two guys fed up with paying eBay listing fees are now selling their own alternative to the online auction business - on eBay.

"We've taken it a long way and now it's just time to move on to a new project," said Peter Michaud, who created the site MightyBids.com in 2003 with Jeff Ramaglia.

Unlike eBay Inc., which charges sellers for listing and selling an item, Montreal-based MightyBids charges only when items sell, Michaud said.

Michaud said he came up with the idea for the site four years ago while making a living selling art on eBay. He would try to sell 50 to 100 items a month on the site and was incurring fees of about $1,200 a month, he said, even when only a few of his items actually sold.

EBay will credit users for unsold items by refunding a listing fee if the item is re-listed on the site, but there is still a charge for the second listing.

So why list on the site whose practices drove him away in the first place?

"It's marketing. It's getting a lot of attention and puts them to the test," he said.

MightyBids.com went up for auction on Thursday. As of Monday afternoon, 39 bids drove the business' purchase price to $20,100 - lower than the reserve price, which Michaud won't divulge.

Along with ownership of a site that Michaud said has over 100,000 registered users in the U.S., Canada and Europe, the buyer will gain the site's code and a variety of MightyBids-related domain names, according to MightyBids' eBay listing.

MightyBids isn't the first business to auction itself off on eBay. In September, domain name registrar Tucows Inc. bought online calendar company Kiko through the site for $258,100.

"There are businesses that are regularly sold on our site," eBay spokeswoman Nichola Sharpe said.

When asked if eBay might be interested in buying MightyBids, Sharpe said the company does not comment on such issues.

MightyBids is just one of many online auction sites that have arisen from discontent with eBay fees, said Rosalinda Baldwin, chief executive of The Auction Guild watchdog group.

Without looking at MightyBids' site but taking into account its user base, she estimated the site wasn't worth much more than the cost of registering its Internet address, or around $9.

"There's hundreds of thousands of them," she said of eBay alternatives. "I could start one up in five minutes."

Indeed, there are many options for those who don't want to trade with the auction giant, ranging from niche sites like music-focused Gemm.com

to the more general and publicly traded uBid.com.

Michaud wouldn’t say if MightyBids has been profitable, but it has been his full-time job for the past four years, he said. He maintains the company is being sold so that he and his partner can start a new business. He and Ramaglia had a staff of 22 employees, he said, but they were let go in anticipation of the sale.

They have contracted a few of their former programmers to help keep the site running, and have taken all auctions down to retool the site, he said. Michaud expects auctions to resume in a week or two - around the time the auction ends on July 1.

So far, plenty of people have contacted them expressing interest about the sale, he said.

Has eBay gotten in touch?

"Not yet," Michaud said.

=~=~=~=

Atari Online News, Etc. is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: dpj@atarinews.org

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.